

Fact Sheet: Arizona's Emergency Preparedness Exercise Program

Arizona conducts some of the largest and most robust emergency preparedness training exercises in the country to test first responders and incident management. The programs involve thousands of first responders from local, tribal, county and state agencies, as well as the private sector.

Four-Year Preparedness Exercise Program

The State's four-year statewide preparedness exercise program rotates around the state to ensure that emergency responders across Arizona practice their skills on a large-scale basis every year.

Coordinated geographically, each Homeland Security Region conducts tabletop exercises (year one), functional exercises (year two) and full-scale exercises (year three). In the fourth year, the Region develops and acts on an improvement plan based on after-action reports. The 2005 full-scale Regional exercise was held in the Eastern Region. The 2006 full-scale exercise will take place in the Northern Region.

Arizona holds three full-scale exercises each year, one in a Homeland Security Region and two at the Palo Verde Nuclear Generating Station.

Additionally, the State participates in cross-border exercises to offer first responders an opportunity to rehearse response on both sides of the border. In 2003, Arizona held a bi-national exercise in Nogales that involved hundreds of first responders from both Arizona and Sonora, Mexico. In 2004, the bi-national exercise occurred in San Luis.

Arizona's Five Homeland Security Regions

Arizona's statewide exercise program is coordinated around Arizona's five homeland security regions, to strengthen the ability of local jurisdictions to address common threat and vulnerability issues and to encourage the sharing of resources across local jurisdictional borders.

Eastern Region:	Pinal, Gila, Graham and Greenlee counties
Southern Region:	Yuma, Pima, Santa Cruz and Cochise counties
Northern Region:	Coconino, Navajo and Apache counties
Western Region:	Mohave, Yavapai and La Paz counties
Central Region:	Maricopa County

Definitions:

A "full-scale exercise" is a simulated emergency event, as close to reality as possible, involving all emergency response functions and full deployment of equipment and personnel.

A "functional exercise" is a simulated emergency event that takes place in the State Emergency Operations Center (EOC). It focused on roles and coordination of multiple organizations.

A "tabletop exercise" is a simulated emergency event focused on operational plan assessment and in-depth problem solving. Though seated at a table, participants respond as if the exercise was really happening. New information is presented as the situation unfolds, challenging participants to reconsider previous decisions and plan next actions based on new information.